

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 /083 W  
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R 260752Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4821

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, LA, TH, NL, VT, SZ, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGNERS AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES IN LAOS

REF: A. VIENTIANE 6147 B. VIENTIANE 6235

SUMMARY: DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN BANGKOK RELATE NEW REDUCTIONS  
IN WESTERN INFLUENCE AND PRESENCE IN LAOS, AND THE LAO EM-  
BASSY IN BANGKOK GIVES FEW VISAS TO AMERICANS. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR CONTACTS ON THE BANGKOK DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT HAVE PRO-  
VIDED SEVERAL INDICATIONS RECENTLY OF PROBLEMS OF WESTERN  
INFLUENCE AND PRESENCE IN LAOS (BESIDES THOSE REPORTED BY  
EMBASSY VIENTIANE, E.G., REFTELS). FIRST, LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
IN LUANG PRABANG TOLD THE SWISS "ON ORDERS" TO WITHDRAW  
THEIR TWO MEDICAL TEAMS FROM THAT CITY, AT THE SAME TIME  
EXPRESSING THE PGNU'S DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FREE  
MEDICAL SUPPLIES. IN ADDITION, THE ACTING APSOTOLIC PRO-  
NUNCIO HAPPENDED TO BE VISITING VIENTIANE ABOUT THREE  
WEEKS AGO WHEN THE LAO PRIESTS AND NUNS REMAINING IN  
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LUANG PRABANG WERE EXPELLED FROM THAT CITY. THIS MEANS

THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH NO LONGER HAS ANY PRESENCE IN WESTERN LAOS. FINALLY, THE DUTCH HAVE ADVISED THAT THEIR HONORARY CONSUL IN VIENTIANE--A FRENCHMAN WHOSE ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN COMING UNDER INCREASING PL PRESSURES--IS DEPARTING AND WILL NOT BE REPLACED.

2. LAO EMBASSY IN BANGKOK HAS REVERTED TO ITS PRE-OCTOBER 12 TIGHT POLICY ON VISA ISSUANCE TO AMERICANS (AND MOST OTHER WESTERNERS, AS WELL) FOR TRAVEL TO LAOS. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, ONLY TWO U.S. JOURNALISTS, LEWIS SIMONS OF THE WASHINGTON POST AND SARAH BERRELL OF NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, HAVE RECEIVED VISAS WITHIN PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THE LATTER ONLY AFTER LAO TOLD HER THEY WOULD CONSIDER HER A SECRETARY BECAUSE SHE WOULD NEVER RECEIVE ONE AS A JOURNALIST. BOTH REQUESTED VISAS IN ORDER TO TRANSIT VIENTIANE AND TAKE THE TOUR LEAVING FROM THAT CITY TO NORTH VIET-NAM. (SIMONS WAITED IN VIENTIANE WITHOUT RECEIVING A DRV VISA, AND BERRELL IS EITHER THERE OR IN HANOI NOW). ONLY THE LAO CONSULATE IN CHIANG MAI APPEARS TO BE LIBERAL IN ISSUING VISAS TO AMERICANS AND DOES NOT REQUIRE INTRODUCTORY LETTERS, WHICH LAO EMBASSY HERE USUALLY INSISTS UPON (WE PROVIDE ONLY TO LEGITIMATE JOURNALISTS AND BUSINESSMEN).  
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